

# Does God Exist?

by: George Bassilios  
St Antonius Coptic Orthodox Church, San Francisco Bay Area

*"If there were no God, there would be no atheists"*  
--GK Chesterton, Where All Roads Lead

## I. Introduction

- † The existence or non-existence of God is the most important question we humans are ever asked to answer.  
If God does exist, a significant set of consequences follow, which should affect every day and every moment of our earthly existence.
- † We are living in an increasingly atheistic world. The magazines we read, the music we hear, the peers and professors we have, are all shifting towards disbelief in God
- † Every Christian must be ready to discuss the question of God's existence -- especially if he/she is in a leadership position. This can make all the difference to the young people who are still open to see both sides of the question.
- † Science is becoming our greatest endeavor to discover truth, people tend to equate science with truth and other kinds of knowledge with imagination. Atheists have used this mindset to their advantage by claiming that science has disproved God.

## II. Can We Prove God's Existence?

- † The simple answer to this question is *yes!*
- † The existence of God **can** be proven using **logical** principles. Not empirical methods.
- † In other words, we cannot setup an experiment in a laboratory where God will appear for us in a test tube or under the conditions of some other controlled environment.
- † But we must understand that the scientific method, while extremely valuable, is only one of the many vehicles that we have for learning about truth and reality.

### III. The Limits of Science

- † The aim of science is to study matter and energy.  
For example, love is a fact of life, but since it is neither matter nor energy it cannot be investigated by science. There is no gadget to measure the mass, length, breadth, or temperature of love.
- † The aim of science is not to investigate all reality, but rather to investigate those realities that are seen in the form of matter and energy.
- † God is neither matter nor energy. Therefore the methods of experimental sciences cannot be applied to disprove His existence.
- † It is true that we can't prove God by the empirical method of verification. But there are many things we can't prove in this way.
- † For example, we can't use the scientific method to prove the existence of Abraham Lincoln. History, by its very nature, is unrepeatable. We can't rerun 1994 Super Bowl game, yet no one denies that these events took place.
- † No one would deny the existence of love or justice or compassion, yet none of these can be proven scientifically. There are certain things that simply can't be measured, and the existence of God fits into that category.

### IV. Different Instruments for Each Science

In the search for truth, one uses different instruments of investigation. Every department of Science has its own specific instruments for investigating truth.

Example:

Medicine	→	Scalpel
Astronomy	→	Telescope
Biology	→	Microscope
Chemistry	→	Test Tubes

- † Same with God, since He is neither matter nor energy and cannot be dissected with a scalpel or placed in a test tube, we use other instruments to investigate His truth. i.e. Prayer, Repentance, Purity of Heart, His Word (Bible), His Body (Church).
- † We simply use *spiritual* tools to discover *spiritual* truths
- † Faith in God is not against reason, it is *beyond* reason. If we could analyze God in a test tube and understand him logically, He would not be God. We would be God

## V. Arguments for the Existence of God

### † The Law of Cause and Effect

- ❖ It has always been a fundamental first principle of philosophy and science that "from nothing, nothing comes"
- ❖ We know that every event in the Universe has a cause for it. Apples fall down because of gravity while rockets go up because of thrust from burning fuel.
- ❖ Every effect has a cause. That cause in turn has another cause behind it. This cause in turn must have another cause behind it.
- ❖ Everything in this Universe has a cause **except** the First Cause. This first cause gave rise to everything else. "God".

There are 4 possible explanations for the existence of the universe.  
It is either:

1. An illusion 2. Self-created 3. Eternal 4. Created

- 1) An Illusion: If the universe is merely an illusion, than who or what is having the illusion? Something must exist to experience the illusion. We don't have to worry about such people. If they are right, even they don't exist! And they shouldn't worry about us, because we don't exist!
- 2) Self Created: This is referred to as "spontaneous generation"  
But for something to create itself, it must first be!  
In other words, in order for something to create itself, it must exist prior to itself. This is, of course, logically impossible.
- 3) Eternal: Science proved that the Universe is not eternal.  
For example it would violate the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of Thermodynamics.  
According to this law, the universe will eventually reach a state of equilibrium, a cold, dark, dead, virtually motionless universe. Clearly if the universe is without beginning, then the universe should already be in a state of equilibrium.
- 4) Created: Having established the other 3 options to be unreasonable, we arrive at the final option: the universe is created. In the words of the very first line of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

- ❖ Moreover, If something exists, there must exist what it takes for it to exist. The universe exists.
- ❖ Therefore, there must exist what it takes for the universe to exist.
- ❖ What it takes for the universe to exist cannot exist within it
- ❖ Therefore, what it takes for the universe to exist must transcend it.
- ❖ Also whatever comes to being or goes out of being doesn't have to be. Suppose that nothing has to be. Then right now nothing would exist.
- ❖ If the universe *began* to exist, then all being must trace its origin to some past moment.
- ❖ And we said that from nothing, nothing comes. So the universe could not have begun.
- ❖ So there must exist something which *has* to exist, which *cannot not exist*. This sort of being is called *necessary*.
- ❖ Either this necessity belongs to the thing in itself or it is derived from another. If derived from another there must ultimately exist a being whose necessity is not derived, that is, an absolutely necessary being. This absolutely necessary being is **God**.

## † The Argument from the Origin of the Idea of God

- ❖ We have ideas of many things. These ideas must arise either from ourselves or from things outside us.
- ❖ One of the ideas we have is the idea of God, an infinite, all-perfect being.
- ❖ This idea could not have been caused by ourselves, because we know ourselves to be limited and imperfect, and no effect can be greater than its cause.
- ❖ Therefore, the idea must have been caused by something outside us. Someone that is infinite, all-perfect, all knowing
- ❖ But only God himself has those qualities. Therefore God must be the cause of the idea we have of him.
- ❖ Therefore God exists.

## † The Argument From Design

- ❖ Common sense tells us that the existence of a magnificent universe sustained by countless laws of physics requires the existence of a Creator of those laws, a Designer of those structures.
- ❖ An intricately crafted universe points to an intelligent Designer. Could time plus chance result in such an intricate design of our universe? Would that not be the greatest leap of faith?

### Consider this:

What are the chances that a tornado blowing through a junkyard containing all the parts of a 747, accidentally assembling them into a plane, and leaving it ready for take-off?

- ❖ When one sees a beautiful painting, his thoughts immediately go to the artist who worked on it. When one looks at the infinitely complex Universe, one has to think of the infinitely intelligent and powerful Artist who put it all together!

## † A Planet Perfect for Life

- ❖ Our atmosphere contains a mixture of gases in perfect proportions to sustain life. Oxygen makes up 21% of our air. If the proportion of oxygen in the air increased by only 2%, objects around us could literally burst into flame.
- ❖ If earth were only a little larger, making its gravity slightly stronger, hydrogen would be unable to escape earth's gravity and would collect in our atmosphere, making it inhospitable to life. Yet, if earth were only slightly smaller, oxygen would escape.
- ❖ The earth travels through space at 66,600 miles an hour as it orbits the sun. That speed perfectly offsets the sun's gravitational pull and keeps earth's orbit the proper distance from the sun. If earth's speed were less, it would be gradually pulled toward the sun, eventually scorching and extinguishing life. Mercury, the planet closest to the sun, has a daytime temperature of about 600 degrees
- ❖ Astronomers estimate that, if the distance from earth to the sun changed by as little as 2 percent, all life would be extinguished as water either froze or evaporated.
- ❖ No wonder the Genesis creation account concludes with this summary of God's handiwork: "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

- ❖ Davies also estimated that if the strength of gravity were changed by only one part in a ten followed by a hundred zeroes, life could never have developed (ibid.).
- ❖ J. P. Moreland (1987, p. 53) claims, "If the mass of a proton were increased by 0.2 percent, hydrogen would be unstable and life would not have formed."
- ❖ Stephen Hawking, the world's most famous living physicist, has calculated that if the rate of the universe's expansion had been smaller by 1 sec or even one part in a hundred thousand million million, the universe would have collapsed into a fireball.

### † The Argument From Conscience (Moral Values)

- ❖ Our sense of moral responsibility cannot be explained except by the existence of a Superior Lawgiver whom we are bound to obey.
- ❖ CS Lewis said "When I was an atheist my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.
- ❖ The existence of a standard of morality requires the existence of a moral God. What else could set the standard? Unless there is a God, there is absolutely no objective basis for morality.
- ❖ If there is no God, who holds us accountable for these things? What can you appeal to to say they are wrong?
- ❖ A moral constitution and moral law imply a creator, law-giver, and judge. This creator, this law-giver and judge, is God

### † Relational Verification of God

- ❖ In our everyday life we all experience love, peace, anger. All these feelings are "real", but there is no scientific method to detect them, verify them, or to measure them.
- ❖ Love is neither matter nor energy. Therefore no scientific apparatus can measure it. Yet love is accepted as a reality. This is because people experience love relationally.
- ❖ The same concept is applied in our knowledge of God. He is neither matter nor energy as we stated above. He is a Supreme Being, and He can be known, experienced, and verified only by **the method of relations.**

- ❖ God can be known in a personal way, and when people know God it reflects in their lives. There are so many changed lives around that no one can refute this as mere propaganda.
- ❖ Countless number of Christians have devoted their lives to serve the poor, the orphans and the unfortunate. **How many atheists do that?**
- ❖ Further, when these deluded young people reap the consequences, atheists are nowhere to be seen. They do not run hospitals, orphanages, old-age homes, and shelters for the destitute. Christians do that because of their relationship with God. This relationship motivates them to express their love practically.

## VI. Pascal's Wager

	GOD EXISTS	GOD DOES NOT EXIST
BET ON GOD	INFINITE GAIN WITH FINITE LOSS	FINITE LOSS
DON'T BET ON GOD	FINITE GAIN WITH INFINITE LOSS	FINITE GAIN

- ❖ Pascal asks us to approach the question of the truthfulness of Christianity as though we were faced with making a wager: a forced wager in which we must bet on one side or the other. Either God does or does not exist. If Christianity is true, then an eternity of infinite happiness awaits the faithful. If false, nothing but annihilation follows death. If we bet on God, and Christianity is false, then perhaps we will have lost temporal, finite pleasures. But if we bet on God and Christianity is true, then we may have lost finite pleasures but gained infinite pleasures. Pascal's point is that the prudent betting man will always wager the finite amount to win the infinite amount. Thus, in the hypothetical case of epistemic parity, one is most rational to bet on God.

## VII. Conclusion

- ❖ In many cases the arguments are not be the real issue. The issue is that Atheists have decided beforehand that they want to be autonomous, independent, masters of their own destiny. *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse” because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things Romans 1:20-23*
- ❖ Blaise Pascal the French philosopher and mathematician said: “God has given us evidence sufficiently clear to convince those with an open heart and mind. Yet evidence sufficiently vague so as not to compel those whose hearts and minds are closed.”
- ❖ God wants all His creation not only to know Him but to get into a deep relationship with Him. He desires all to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim 2:4). But we have to be ready to search for this truth with all our heart. "You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart." Jer 29:13.
- ❖ Pascal also says that there are three kinds of people: those who have sought God and found him, those who are seeking and have not yet found, and those who neither seek nor find. The first are reasonable and happy, the second are reasonable and unhappy, and the third are both unreasonable and unhappy. If what's at stake stimulates us at least to seek, then it will at least stimulate us to be reasonable. And if the promise Christ makes is true, all who seek will find (Mt 7:7-8), then we will be reasonable AND happy.

### References:

- A Quest for God, Paul Johnson
- The Mind of God, Paul Davies
- God and the Astronomers, Robert Jastrow
- Whatever Happened to Truth, Anthony Coniaris
- A Brief History of Time, Stephen Hawkins
- The Origin of the Universe, John Barrow
- The Quotable Einstein, Albert Einstein
- The Columbia History of the World, John Garraty
- Can you Prove that God Exists, Gannon Murphy
- Darwin's Black Box, Mike Behe

**Glory be to God Forever**